



February 15, 2023

Attn: Human Services and Aging Committees

RE: SB989 - Proposed 4.1 Direct Care Nursing Home Minimum Staffing Mandate

To Whom it May Concern:

I am Nina Bennett RN, director of nursing for a skilled nursing facility in Torrington CT. We have 75 beds and more than 120 employees at our facility. I have been a RN for about fifteen years, and love working with the elderly population. They have interesting stories and it is amazing to get to know the older patients and their point of view related to their many years of life experience.

In the role I have of providing care by running a skilled nursing facility, I can foresee an issue with mandating a 4.1 direct care minimum staffing mandate. Every day I spend time reviewing and looking for nursing staff to recruit and hire online. There is just not enough nursing staff in the workforce. The staff currently working in our field are aging out. Our current staff average age is middle age for certified nursing assistants and charge nurses. Our RN supervisors are closer to sixty years of age. I have been working very hard to fill all our open positions and still for the last year have not been able to successfully hire enough charge nurses and CNAs to cover all the open positions. This leads to over time and burn out. So many nurses that I know personally in this post covid workforce have added difficulties in continuing to work in this field. Some now have added anxiety, depression, or PTSD and this leads to a workforce that can burn out even quicker. The idea has good intentions, as we all want our elderly residents to get the care they need, however we are currently doing this with the staff we have. Having worked in this field for this long in this setting there would not be enough tasks to keep a work force of that magnitude productive. This unfunded mandate will not solve the staffing problem. It will create new ones. We will not have the workers needed and Connecticut facilities will then be out of compliance with the new mandate that can't possibly be achieved. I am testifying to the human services and aging committees that a new staffing mandate will make matters much worse for all Connecticut facilities. The facility also does not have the funds to staff as the proposed mandate would require. This would lead to more facility closures and that would be detrimental to our elderly people in Connecticut.

The long term care workforce needs support and should be of the highest priority however this unfunded staffing mandate would not be a support. The committees should not pass the SB 989, an act concerning nursing homes for all of the reasons mentioned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nina Bennett RN DNS".

Nina Bennett RN DNS

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